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A Gloucestershire Lad



A Gloucestershire Lad

at Home and Abroad

by
F. W. Harvey



Fourth Impression

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TO
ALL COMRADES OF MINE
WHO LIE DEAD IN FOREIGN FIELDS
FOR LOVE OF ENGLAND,
OR WHO LIVE TO PROSECUTE THE WAR
FOR ANOTHER ENGLAND

PREFACE

MOST of these poems were written at the Front, and appeared in the *Fifth Gloucester Gazette*—the first paper ever published from the trenches.

The author was then a Lance-Corporal in the 5th Battalion of the Gloucestershire Regiment, and as such gained the Distinguished Conduct Medal in August, 1915.

The award appears as follows in the *London Gazette*—

F. W. HARVEY.—“ For conspicuous gallantry on the night of the 3rd-4th August, 1915, near Hebuterne, when, with a patrol, he and another Non-Commissioned Officer went out to reconnoitre in the direction of a suspected listening post. In advancing they encountered the hostile post evidently covering a working party in the rear. Corporal Knight at once shot one of the enemy, and, with Lance-Corporal Harvey, rushed the post, shooting two others, and assistance arriving the enemy fled. Lance-Corporal Harvey pursued, felling one of the retreating Germans with a bludgeon. He seized him, but finding his revolver empty and the enemy having opened fire, he was called back by Corporal Knight, and the prisoner escaped. Three Germans were killed and their rifles and a Mauser pistol were brought in. The patrol had no loss.”

The poems are written by a soldier and reflect a soldier's outlook. Mud, blood and khaki are rather conspicuously absent. They are, in fact, the last things a soldier wishes to think or talk about.

What he does think of is his home.

Bishop Frodsham, preaching in Gloucester Cathedral, after visiting the Troops in France, quoted the following poem in a passage which admirably expresses the feelings of most of our fighting men.

"To suppose that these men enjoy the fighting would be sheer nonsense. The soldier does not want to go on killing and maiming Germans or Turks. He wants to get the dreadful war finished, so that he can get back to England again. But he wants the matter fought to a finish because he has seen in the villages and towns of France what German domination means. It has made him think furiously, as the French say. Many regiments and ships' companies while away the impracticable hours by publishing little newspapers.

"The *Fifth Gloucester Gazette* is one of these journals. We are proud of the courage and the gaiety these little papers show. We laugh at their quips and jokes: then suddenly we find that the corners of our mouths are quivering

and the tears are gathering in our eyes. We see that the boys are thinking about England below their gaiety. One young poet lifts the veil in this exquisite little rondeau—

“ ‘ If we return, will England be
Just England still to you and me—
The place where we must earn our bread?
We who have walked among the dead,
And watched the smile of agony,
And seen the price of liberty,
Which we have taken carelessly
From other hands. Nay, we shall dread :
If we return,
Dread lest we hold blood-guiltily
The thing that men have died to free.
Our English fields shall blossom red
In all the blood that has been shed,
By men whose guardians are we,
If we return.’ ”

That is perhaps the keynote of a book which the author has dedicated to all dead and living comrades who have loved England.

J. H. COLLETT, C.M.G., COLONEL

Commanding the Fifth Battalion of the
Gloucestershire Regiment in France.

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IN FLANDERS

*I'm homesick for my hills again—
My hills again !
To see above the Severn plain
Unscabbarded against the sky
The blue high blade of Cotswold lie ;
The giant clouds go royally
By jagged Malvern with a train
Of shadows. Where the land is low
Like a huge imprisoning O
I hear a heart that's sound and high,
I hear the heart within me cry :
" I'm homesick for my hills again—
My hills again !
Cotswold or Malvern, sun or rain !
My hills again ! "*

A SONG OF GLOUCESTERSHIRE

(Dedicated to the Gloucestershire Society)

*North, South, East, and West :
Think of whichever you love the best.
Forest and vale and high blue hill :
You may have whichever you will,
And quaff one cup to the love o' your soul
Before we drink to the lovely whole.*

Here are high hills with towns all stone,
(Did you come from the Cotswolds then?)
And an architecture all their own,
And a breed of sturdy men.

But here's a forest old and stern,
(Say, do you know the Wye?)
Where sunlight dapples green miles of fern,
A river wandering by.

Here's peaceful meadow-land and kine,
(Do you see a fair grey tower?)
Where sweet together close entwine
Grass, clover, and daisy flower.

Here stretches the land toward the sea
(Behold the castle bold !)
Where men live out life merrily,
And die merry and old.

*North, South, East, and West :
Think of whichever you love the best.
Forest and vale and high blue hill :
You shall have whichever you will,
To quaff one cup to the love o' your soul
Before we drink to the lovely whole.*

BALLADE OF THE RICH HEART

What thief is he can rob this treasury,
Which hath not gold but dreams within its
gates?

What power can enter in to take from me
My treasure, while upon the threshold waits
"Courage," my watch-dog, keeping back the
fates

Which follow close until I do depart
In safety from their little loves and hates?
Singing of all I carry in my heart.

Guarded of dreams against all evil chance,
With young Adventure arm in arm I go
To laugh at Luck and silly Circumstance.
And, counting naught that comes to me my foe,
I change, if 'tis my whim, the winter snow
To blowing blossom : and by that same art
I fashion as I will Life's weal and woe :
Singing of all I carry in my heart.

Let me go lame and lousy like a tramp
But feel the wind and know the moonlit sky !
What matter if the falling dew be damp—
Still is it dew ! And well contented I
Among my dreams (in seeming poverty)

Far from the cities and the noisy mart,—
With Life and Death—my dearest friends—to
lie,
Singing of all I carry in my heart.

Envoi.

Prince of this world, high monarch of all those
Who deem Reality life's better part,
Herewith I tweak thy crooked royal nose—
Singing of all I carry in my heart.

SONG OF MINSTERWORTH PERRY

When Noe went sailing with his crew
And waters covered over the earth,
Trees that in Eden-orchard grew
Got washed away to Minsterworth.

Now every year they bloom again,
(All of the trees spread healthy root)
And after Summer's shine and rain
We gather up the blessèd fruit ;

Whereof we get a heavenly drink
(Two rather !) for to make us merry ;
Oh ! Cider's one, and I do think
The name o' t'other one is Perry !

A GLOUCESTERSHIRE WISH AT EASTERTIDE

Here's luck, my lads, while Birdlip Hill is steep :—
—As long as Cotswold's high or Severn's deep.
Our thoughts of you shall blossom and abide
While blow the orchards about Severn side :—
—While a round bubble like the children blow,
May Hill floats purple in the sunset glow.

Our prayers go up to bless you where you lie,
While Gloucester tower stands up against the sky
To write old thoughts of loveliness, and trace
Dead men's long living will to give God praise :—
—Who of His mercy doth His Own Son give
This blessed morn, that you, and all, may live !

SONG OF THE ROAD

Cheerily upon the road
Tramp we all together,
Bearing every one his load
Through the changeful weather.

To one Hope we all belong,
To one Fate a debtor,
Songs must cheer our steps along,
Mirth the road make better.

Wishes cannot make a horse,
Only beggars would ride;
We must meet the fairy force
In each sombre wood-side.

We must bravely tread the way,
Gaily sing together,
Till we reach the endless day,
Heaven's golden weather.

PIPER'S WOOD

In Minsterworth when March is in,
And Spring begins to gild the days,
Oh ! then starts up a joyous din,
For Piper's Wood is full of praise,
Because the birds deem winter gone
And welcome the returning sun.

Blackbird and thrush and robin dear
Within that wood try over all
The songs they mean to shout so clear
Before green leaves grow red and fall ;
And harkening in its shadows you
Must needs sing out of Summer too.

BALLADE OF RIVER SAILING

The Dorothy was very small : a boat

Scarce any bigger than the sort one rows
With oars ! We got her for a five-pound note
At second-hand. Yet when the river flows
Strong to the sea, and the wind lightly blows,
Then see her dancing on the tide, and you'll
Swear she's the prettiest little craft that goes
Up-stream from Framilode to Bollopool.

Bare-footed, push her from the bank afloat,
(The soft warm mud comes squelching through
your toes !)

Scramble aboard : then find an antidote
For every care a jaded spirit knows :
While round the boat the broken water crows
With laughter, casting pretty ridicule
On human life and all its little woes,
Up-stream from Framilode to Bollopool.

How shall I tell you what the sunset wrote
Upon the outspread waters—gold and rose :
Or how the white sail of our little boat
Looks on a summer sky ? The hills enclose
With blue solemnity : each white scar shows

Clear on the quarried Cotteswolds high and cool.
And high and cool a fevered spirit grows
Up-stream from Framilode to Bollopool.

Envoi.

Prince, you have horses : motors, I suppose,
As well ! At finding pleasure you're no fool.
But have you got a little boat that blows
Up-stream from Framilode to Bollopool ?

SONG OF MINSTERWORTH

Air: "The Vicar of Bray"

In olden, olden centuries

On Gloucester's holy ground, sir,
The monks did pray and chant all day,

And grow exceeding round, sir;
And here's the reason that they thrive

To praise their pleasant fortune,
"We keep our beasts"—thus quoth the priests,
"In Minsterworth—that's Mortune!"¹

*So this is the chorus we will sing,
And this is the spot we'll drink to,
While blossom blows and Severn flows,
And Earth has mugs to clink to.*

Oh! there in sleepy Summer sounds

The drowsy drone of bees, sir,
And there in Winter paints the sun
His patterns 'neath the trees, sir;

¹ The ancient name of the parish was Mortune—that is, the village in the mere; and the name was changed to Minsterworth early in the fourteenth century because it belonged to the Minster or Abbey of Gloucester, and was the Minster's "Worth" or farm where the cattle were kept.—F. W. H.

And there with merry song doth run
A river full of fish, sir,
That Thursday sees upon the flood
And Friday on the dish, sir.

*So this is the chorus we will sing
And this is the spot we'll drink to,
While blossom blows and Severn flows,
And Earth has mugs to clink to.*

The jovial priests to dust are gone,
We cannot hear their singing;
But still their merry chorus-song
From newer lips runs ringing.
And we who drink the sunny air
And see the blossoms drifting,
Will sit and sing the self-same thing
Until the roof we're lifting.

*So this is the chorus we will sing,
And this is the spot we'll drink to,
While blossom blows and Severn flows,
And Earth has mugs to clink to.*

CRICKET : THE CATCH

Whizzing, fierce, it came
Down the summer air,
Burning like a flame
On my fingers bare,
And it brought to me
As swift—a memory.

Happy days long dead
Clear I saw once more.
Childhood that is fled :—
Rossall on the shore,
Where the sea sobs wild
Like a homesick child.

Oh, the blue bird's fled !
Never man can follow.
Yet at times instead
Comes this scarlet swallow,
Bearing on its wings
(Where it skims and dips,
Gleaming through the slips)
Sweet Time-strangled things.

WONDERS

What magic is in common grass
To bring this miracle to pass?
That within it one should find
Salves to give him peace of mind?
—It's very queer that garden weed
Should minister to my soul's need.

What fairy in the falling rain
Takes the robin's small refrain,
And twists it to a tiny charm
To keep a tempted heart from harm?
—It puzzles me a wild bird's song
Should save my soul from doing wrong.

TRIOLET

If Beauty were a mortal thing
That died like laughter, grief, and lust,
The poet would not need to sing.
If Beauty were a mortal thing
It would not wound us with its sting.
We should lie happy in the dust
If Beauty were a mortal thing
That died like laughter, grief, and lust.

TRIOLET

Winter has hardened all the ground,
But flowers are on the window-pane;
No others are there to be found :—
Winter has hardened all the ground.
But here, while Earth is bare and bound,
Bloom ghosts of those his frost has slain.
Winter has hardened all the ground,
But flowers are on the window-pane.

WHAT GOD SAID

"This be a lesson," said Life, with a frown—
And knocked me down.

"And serve him right!" cried the goodly men,
While I—I picked myself up, and then
Went on just as I used to do.

But the good God smiled as He shook His head;
"It's a troublesome child," said He, "but yet
Not quite so altogether dead

As those solemn old fools that laughed. Don't
fret!"

At least, I think that's what He said.

TO HIS MAID

Since above Time, upon Eternity

 The lovely essence of true loving's set,
Time shall not triumph over you and me,

 Nor—though we pay his debt—
Shall Death hold mastery.

Your eyes are bright for ever. Your dark hair

 Holds an eternal shade. Like a bright sword
Shall flame the vision of your strange sweet ways,
 Cleaving the years: and even your smallest
 word,

Lying forgotten with the things that were,
Shall glow and kindle, burning up the days.

BALLADE OF DAMNABLE THINGS

I do not like a horse to throw me off.

I do not like the motor-bike to skid.

I do not like a nasty hacking cough,

Nor influenza. And I never did

Enjoy the thought of frizzling on a grid,

The while wee flaming devils dance and sing.

But short of simple Hell without the lid,

I think that jaundice is the damn'dest thing.

Fleas, faintness, famine, stomach-ache, the feel

Of flies upon your face, rats in your bed ;

Lice, dusty roads, a blister on your heel,

The taste of salts, the scent of things long
dead,

Home-sickness, chilblains, grief uncomforted,

A hollow tooth with cold, a hornet sting :—

These are unpleasant, yet when all is said

I think that jaundice is the damn'dest thing.

See you the whole bright world before your eye

Dwindle as ugly as a wrinkled pea.

See Beauty, a pricked bubble : Truth, a lie :

Achievement, foam on muddy water. See

Yourself a yellow devil suddenly,

And all the zest of youth gone journeying—
See you all this, and then you will agree
(I think) that jaundice is the damn'dest thing.

Envoi.

Prince of the damned—I ransack my supplies
To find a fitting wish at you to fling.
Now may you look on Hell through yellow eyes.
I think that jaundice is the damn'dest thing.

SONG OF HEALTH

For friends to stand beside, for foes to fight,
For devil's work to break, for Wrong and Right,
And will (however hard) to choose between them :
For merry tales, no matter where you glean
 them :

Songs, stars, delight of birds, and summer roses,
Sunshine, wherein my friend the dog now dozes :
Danger—the zest of life, and Love, the lord
Of Life and Death : for every open word
Spoken in blame or praise by friend o' mine
To spur me on : for old, good memories,
Keeping in my soul's cellar like good wine :
For Truth that's strong, and Beauty so divine :
For animals, and children, and for trees,
Both wintry-black and blossoming in white :
For homely gardens and for humming bees :
For drink, and dreams, and daisies on the sod,
Plain food, and fire (when it will light)—
 Thank God !

GRATITUDE

Grateful—ah, yes !
I, who have seen
The larches brighten green.
The orchard's Easter dress,
And those red thousand poppies,
In wheat below the coppice :

I, who (while others lie in graves
Of earth, or rocked with waves),
Have leave to walk
And sing and talk,
With golden lads and girls,
My friends,
To all the farthest ends,
Whither Life whirls. . . .

How can I not feel gratitude for this
And other bliss,
Which God—dear God—hath sent,
For my great wonderment ?

THE SOLDIER SPEAKS

Within my heart I safely keep,
England, what things are yours :
Your clouds, and cloud-like flocks of sheep
That drift o'er windy moors.
Possessing naught, I proudly hold
Great hills and little gay
Hill-towns set black on sunrise-gold
At breaking of the day.

Though unto me you be austere
And loveless, darling land ;
Though you be cold and hard, my dear,
And will not understand.
Yet have I fought and bled for you,
And, by that self-same sign,
Still must I love you, yearn to you,
England—how truly mine !

A PRESENT FROM FLANDERS

Where dewfall and the moon
Make precious things,
On every small festoon
A spider slings :

Treading—like dead leaves under
All drifted days,
Happy the lovers wander
In Winter ways ;

No thought of pain perplexes
The peace they hold ;
No worldly sorrow vexes
The lovers. Gold—

All golden gleams the way ;
How strange such riches
Drawn from rough men should be
Seven or eight worlds away,
Fighting, and carelessly,
Dying in ditches !

IF WE RETURN

(*Rondeau*)

If we return, will England be
Just England still to you and me?
The place where we must earn our bread?
We, who have walked among the dead.
And watched the smile of agony,

And seen the price of Liberty,
Which we have taken carelessly
From other hands. Nay, we shall dread,
If we return,

Dread lest we hold blood-guiltily
The things that men have died to free.
Oh, English fields shall blossom red
For all the blood that has been shed
By men whose guardians are we,
If we return.

A PEOPLE RENEWED

Now these like men shall live,
And like to princes fall.
They take what Fate will give
At this great festival.

And since at length they find
That life is sweet indeed,
They cast it on the wind
To serve their country's need.

See young "Adventure" there
("Make-money-quick" that was)
Hurls down his gods that were
For Honour and the Cross!

Old "Grab-at-Gold" lies low
In Flanders. And again
(Because men will it so)
England is ruled by Men.

THE AWAKENING

At night, in dream,
I saw those fields round home
 Agleam.

Drenched all with dew
Beneath day's newest dome
 Of gold and blue.

All night—
All night they shone for me, and then
 Came light.
And suddenly I woke, and lovely joy !
I was at home, with the fields gold as when
 I was a boy.

.
Thus shall all men rise up at last to see,
Their dearest dreams golden reality.

THE RETURN

The unimaginable hour

That folds away our joys and pain
Holds not the spirit in its power.

Therefore I shall come home again
(Wherever my poor body lies),

To whisper in the summer trees
Upon a lazy fall and rise
Of wind : and in day's red decline
Walk with the sun those roads of mine,
Then rosy with my memories.

Though you may see me not, yet hear
My laughter in the laughing streams,
My footsteps in the running rain. . . .
For sake of all I counted dear
And visit still within my dreams
I shall at last come home again.

LAND OF HEART'S DELIGHT

Glory's a temple open wide,
Content, a little shrine.
But Heart's Delight is a land so bright
We reckon it half divine.
It lies wherever man has lived,
But wheresoe'er you find it
Its skies are blue with dreams come true,
And Heaven is just behind it.

Glory's the universal gleam
Of all God gives to men.
Content, the little silver dream
He sends to one in ten.
But Heart's Delight, all golden bright,
Is given to him alone
Who has hidden his heart in the deepest part
Of a place called Home.

GONNEHEM

Of Gonnehem it shall be said
That we arrived there late and worn
With marching, and were given a bed
Of lovely straw. And then at morn
On rising from deep sleep saw dangle—
Shining in the sun to spangle,
The all-blue heaven—branch loads of red
Bright cherries which we bought to eat,
Dew-wet, dawn-cool, and sunny-sweet.
There was a tiny court-yard too,
Wherein one shady walnut grew.
Unruffled peace the farm encloses—
I wonder if beneath that tree,
The meditating hens still be.
Are the white walls now gay with roses?
Does the small fountain yet run free?
I wonder if that dog still dozes. . . .
Some day we must go back to see.

THE REST FARM

Into this quiet place
Of peace we come.
The War God hides his face,
His mouth is dumb.

All reckless, wild decrees
His lips repeat,
Are hushed by a little breeze
In waving wheat.

And, like the penance-peace
In a heart forlorn,
Thrills the word of the trees—
The sigh of the corn.

BALLADE OF BEELZEBUB, GOD OF FLIES

Some men there are will not abide a rat

Within their bivvy. If one chance to peep
At them through little beady eyes, then pat,
They throw a boot and rouse a mate from
sleep

To hunt the thing, and on its head they heap
Curses quite inappropriate to its size.

I care for none of these, but broad and deep
I curse Beelzebub—the God of Flies.

Others may hunt the mouse with bayonet bright,
And beard the glittering beetle in his lair,
And fill the arches of the ancient night

With clamour, if a stolid toad should stare
Sleepily forth from the snug corner where
They fain would rest. But I will sympathize
With beetle, rat, and toad. I have no care.
I curse Beelzebub—the God of Flies.

The tiny gnats they swarm in many a cloud,
To tangle their small limbs within my hair
And sting. The blood-flies dart : and buzzing
loud
Blue-bottles draw mad patterns on the air.

The house-flies creep, and, what is hard to bear,
Feed on the poison papers advertise,
And rub their hands with relish of such fare !
I curse Beelzebub—the God of Flies.

Envoi.

Prince—Clown of Europe—others shall make
haste
To call damnation on your limbs and eyes.
Spending good oaths upon you were a waste :
I curse Beelzebub—the God of Flies.

TO THE KAISER

(Confidentially)

I met a man—a refugee,
And he was blind in both his eyes, sir.
And in his pate
A silver plate
(’Twas rather comical to see !)
Shone where the bone skull used to be
Before your shrapnel struck him, Kaiser.
Shattering in the self-same blast
(Blind as a tyrant in his dotage),
The foolish wife
Who risked her life,
As peasants will do till the last,
Clinging to one small Belgian cottage.

That was their home. The whining child
Beside him in the railway carriage
Was born there, and
The little land
Around it (now untilled and wild),
Was brought him by his wife on marriage.
The child was whining for its mother,
And interrupting half he said, sir.
I’ll never see the pair again. . . .
Nor they the mother that lies dead, sir.

That's all—a foolish tale, not worth
The ear of noble lord or Kaiser.
A man un-named,
By shrapnel maimed,
Wife slain, home levelled to the earth—
That's all. You see no point? Nor I, sir.
Yet on the day you come to die, sir,
When all your war dreams cease to be,
Perchance will rise
Before your eyes
(Piercing your hollow heart, Sir Kaiser !)
The picture that I chanced to see,
Riding (we'll say) from A to B.

ROBERTth HERRICK SOLILOQUIZES
ON THE C.O.

A sweet disorder in the dress
Kindles in him small kindliness.
My slack puttees him oft have thrown
Into a fine distraction.
An erring lace he cannot bear,
Nor the neglected, flowing hair.
Did he command that splendid force
The W.V.T.C., of course,
He'd see they dressed with careful art,
Very precise in every part.
And would, I'm certain, never dote
On the tempestuous petticoat.

THE THREE PADRES

(*Acrostics*)

R. C. Chaplain.

Pale-faced, brown-eyed, slight,
Upon a lanky bay
Rides this modern knight
Down rain-beat road to-day;
In a little broken shrine
Emptying out the blessed wine.

Wesleyan Chaplain.

Much loved by all who know you,
Especially you seem
Envied for smiles that show you
Kindness in a gleam.

Church of England Chaplain.

Helm of our literary ship,
Editor of this Gazette,¹
Luck be yours, although you whip
My muse into an awful sweat.

¹ *Fifth Gloucester Gazette.* See Introduction.

WALT WHITMAN DESCRIBES
MAJOR W.

Nonchalantly he stands
On every step of life
Tapping his legging.

It is just the same
Whether we're expecting
A Boche attack
Or Church Parade.

Nothing flusters him. Men
Confidently go
To do his bidding :
While he stands there

Revolving stunts ;
And nonchalantly
Tapping his legging.

SERGEANT FINCH

He's a popular sergeant, you bet,
For he'll rough it along with his men,
And start up a song in the wet
To set 'em all smiling again.

His stories are naughty, I'm told,
His voice has a sonorous sound ;
But the envy of all who behold
Is the way that his puttees are wound.

Blue-eyed, debonair, with a hat
Cocked sideways the eighth of an inch,
He's sparrow-like : but for all that
The name in his pay-book is Finch.

C COMPANY COOK

" Do you want j-jam on it ? " he'd say,
Twirling a red moustache.

We chaffed him over rations every day,

" Say, is this tea or hash ? "

" Jim, tell us, do,

Why you put sugar in the blooming stew."

" —And there's a heap o' coal in this—not
half ! . . ."

To all our chaff

" Do you want j-jam on it ? " he'd say.

EPITAPH

(*T. D.*, 13/3/16)

A shallow trench for one so tall !
" Heads down "—no need for that old call
 Beneath the upturned sod.
Safe lies his body, never fret,
Behind that crumpled parapet,
And over all this wind and wet
 His soul sits safe with God.

SONNET

(To H. M.)

Him, the gods, loving, took while life was
young. . . .

Say rather (clinging to a wiser creed)
God took, and suddenly on wings of speed
Bore to the utter quietness far flung
Of fields Elysian where the horrid tongue
Of battle is not. For He knew his need
Better than those who knew him well indeed,
Loving him best. Above his grave is rung
The death-bell of all things which hurt the sense
And vex the mind and plague the soul of man,
Tingeing the rainbow colours of his best
Dreams drably : and hath cried a voice, " Go
hence !

Old Angel Time, to weary whom you can,
The while my well-beloved child hath rest."

THE FIRST SPRING DAY

(To A. E. S.)

We laid you fast in frozen clay
When Winter had enchained the land.
(Lad, was it but three weeks to-day?)
And now comes Springtime's messenger with
golden tidings in his hand.

A mist blows off the thawing earth,
And drips from every budding tree,
The springs are loosed, and mad with mirth
Run lispig in the fallen leaves, or laughing in
the sunlight free.

Oh you who loved the song so well,
Do you not hear the throstle's note?
Nor heed the lovesome light that fell
As warm five thousand years ago, when Solomon,
the wise king, wrote?

"Sweet," wrote he. Yes, the light is sweet!
And maddening sweet to walk in Spring:
Yet is the pleasure incomplete—
How should the living understand the melodies
that dead throats sing?

Thinker and poet clutch in vain
The secret of a laughing rill,
And Shakespeare's self could never gain
The message blown so mockingly by trumpet of
a daffodil.

Dear lad, for you I will not call,
Nor let a foolish dread be born.
A thousand years is still too small
To learn the secrets you must learn, ere you arise
on Doomsday morn.

For you have set your ear to earth
To list the growing of the flowers :
And catch the strains of Death and Birth :
And take the honey that is stored by all the
fitting bee-like hours.

And you must put to memory
The silver music of the stars
That raineth down so silently,
And all the mighty harmony scrolled on the sky
in glittering bars.

The music that no man can make,
The colours that he cannot see,
These out of darkness you shall take
And nourish up your growing soul with manna of
their mystery.

And then when you awake again
(And I have slept a little too),
How we shall rise to pace anew
An earth—where every dream is true, and
nothing is unknown but pain.

DEFIANCE

I saw the orchards whitening
To Easter in late Lent.
Now struck of hell's own lightning
With branches broken and bent
Behold the tall trees rent :—
Beaten with iron rain !
And ever in my brain
To every shell that's sent
Sounds back this small refrain :—
" You foolish shells, come kill me,
Blacken my limbs with flame :
I saw the English orchards
(And so may die content)
All white before I came ! "

THE ORCHARDS, THE SEA, AND THE GUNS

Of sounds which haunt me, these

Until I die

Shall live. First the trees,

Swaying and singing in the moonless night.

(The wind being wild)

And I

A wakeful child,

That lay and shivered with a strange delight.

Second—less sweet but thrilling as the first—

The midnight roar

Of waves upon the shore

Of Rossall dear :

The rhythmic surge and burst

(The gusty rain

Flung on the pane !)

I loved to hear.

And now another sound

Wilder than wind or sea,

When on the silent night

I hear resound

In mad delight

The guns. . . .

They bark the whole night through ;

And though I fear,

Knowing what work they do,

I somehow thrill to hear.

DYING IN SPRING

Lo, now do I behold
Sunshine and greenery
And Death together rolled—
Yet not in mockery.

Life was a faithful friend ;
Shall I make other of that dark brother
Whom God doth send ?

My dear companions—you
That have been more to me
Than grief or gaiety—
This sure is true :
That we shall meet once more beyond Death's
door,
Again be merry friends
Where friendship never ends.

VICTORY

Whether you shall see it, or I,
We cannot tell
Now. And it doesn't matter.

For 'twill come when Hell
Is covered, and the batter
Of guns fades :—Victory !

Remember then, you who have fellowed the dead—
Though the worst loudest last
Thunder before the sun—

Remember—though the Hun
And his brute power has passed—
There are more wars to be won !

Oh ! while life's Life, to all Eternity :—
Brothers, press on ! Go On To VICTORY !

DEATH THE REVEALER

Within this dim five-windowed house of sense
 I watch through coloured glass
 The shapes that pass.
Soon must I journey hence
To meet the great winds of the outer world,
 And see
 (When God has turned the key)
The true and terrible colours of His scheme
 Which now I dream.

F. W. H.

(A Portrait)

A thick-set, dark-haired, dreamy little man,
 Uncouth to see,
Revolving ever this preposterous plan—
Within a web of words spread cunningly
To tangle Life—no less,
(Could he expect success !)

Of Life, he craves not much, except to watch.
 Being forced to act,
He walks behind himself, as if to catch
The motive :—an accessory to the fact,
Faintly amused, it seems,
Behind his dreams.

Yet hath he loved the vision of this world,
 And found it good :
The Faith, the fight 'neath Freedom's flag
 unfurled,
The friends, the fun, the army-brotherhood.
But faery-crazed or worse
He twists it all to verse !

POETRY

The poems of Earth are lived,
· Not scratched with the dirty pen.
They are writ in the sense of things
And sung in the hearts of men.

Sensuous strains of Spring
Pouring in silver flood,
Summer's golden delight
Warming the waiting blood.

Colour, and scent, and sound
Of all the changing year :—
These are the poems of Earth
Which every man must hear.

Sorrow, and pain, and love,
Joy, and fear, and regret :—
These are the burning poems
That all our hearts beget.

These are the poems of Earth
That every man must pen :
Which you and I make up
And straight forget again.

PROSE POEMS

I. HEAVEN

“Take me, then,” he said to the angel, “upon this great journey to Heaven.”

The angel touched his eyelids.

“Where, then, is Hell?” asked the man.

The spirit pointed out a bored-looking man quite near the throne.

“But he is in Heaven,” protested the mortal.

“Even so, but he does not know it,” replied the angel.

2. THE MOTH

"It is the brightness of God!" exclaimed the moth, beholding the candle.

"But it will scorch you worse than Hell's fire," warned a friendly insect.

"What matter that?" shouted the moth.

"It is the brightness of God!"

Then it flew into the flame and was shrivelled.

3. THE ARTIST

“ I am tired of failing ! ” said the Artist, and he ripped up the picture with his penknife.

“ Now he will remember my love ! ” thought the woman, and she smiled. But when the Artist saw the smile on her face, he took his brushes and made a picture of it, and the love of the woman was forgotten.

4. THE WINDOW GLASS

Against the dark glass shone like a flower the mouth of his beloved. But in vain he pressed lips of fire upon the panes—in vain !

“ Then, since Love may not melt,” cried he, “ shatter, O Death ! ”

God broke the window with His fist.

5. IN THE FIELD OF TIME

In the field of Time, at the end of the path of daisies, grow flaming poppies, taking the eye more readily than the flowers of gold and white.

But a man, looking at some he had plucked to wear, discovered (formed by the inside shape and hue of the petals) a black cross at the bottom of every scarlet cup, and cast them from him.

6. BLUE GRASS

"Is not this the mountain of blue grass?" asked the stranger. "Why is the grass as green as in our common meadows?"

"It was never any other colour," said the native.

"It looked blue from afar," protested the traveller, "and I have journeyed a long and difficult way to find it."

"You had better have stayed at home," answered the native.

"No," returned the stranger, with a sad smile, "I had better have come, but now I will go home. The grass there has become blue."

7. THE POET

“What is that lovely thing you have in your heart? Why do you not sing of it?” asked the Muse.

“I have not yet lost it,” answered the Poet.

8. SORROW

The lean dagger had gone into the Poet's heart.

Shuddering, he plucked it free, lest he should die. And then—by magic—it became in his hand a shining sword fit to smite down the sorrow of the world.

9. THE MIRACLE

Why has the Earth taken on a new significance?

Why is the smoking mist now white music,
and the world's architecture more wonderful
than a fine cathedral?

It is something that has happened in your
heart.

Perhaps (I do not know) you have learnt to
hate yourself or to love a fellow-being.

10. FAITH

Why am I so many men?
It is because you have not Faith.

What is Faith?
Faith is a fire.

But how does a man come by it?
Perhaps God gives it him.

II. TIME—THE HORSE

Whither does Time trot us? And is moonlight brightening the harness buckles as when children play beneath the rugs, guessing "Where are we?" and father drives home—home—beneath the stars?

12. THE REBUILDING OF REALITY

"Behold the sunshine, the green earth, the shining sea!" shouted my Eyes.

Said Heart: "Oh, I cannot; the realities I knew are gone! Death's shadow is upon all this."

"Well, it is yours to create realities anew," smiled Death. "Hitherto (like the rest) you seem to have done it badly."

13. THE TOKEN

Because of you I am insatiably curious about death.

Because of Him who imagined and made you I am able tranquilly to abide the time.

Shrivelled in His glory: scorched by His humour: because He has imagined and made you, I trust and am sure.



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WITH YOU, RIGHT THROUGH

on 15 October, 2018

